A SERMON OF Christs Miracles.

Preached by ARTHVR DENT *Minister of the word of God*, at South-shoobery in Essex,

The Fourth Impression.

Acts, 3 verse, 6.

Then said *Peter*, siluer and gold haue I none, but such as I haue that giue I thee; in the name of Iesus Christ of Nazareth, rise vp and walke.

AT LONDON
Printed by *G. E.* for *Iohn Wright*, and are to be sould at his shop at Christ-Church gate.
1610.

A Sermon of Christes Miracles.

Iohn.9.16,

Then said some of the Pharisees: This man is not of God, because hee keepeth not the Sabboth; others sayd; How can a man that is a sinner doe such miracles? And there was a dissention among them.

IN this verse is set downe a double opinio which the Pharisees held concerning Christ, and especially concerning the works which he had wrought among them. Some of them haue peremptorily and flatly condemned him, saying, that he was a man that was not of God: and they render a reason, or rather a shaddow of a reason: namely because he keepeth not the Sabboth, but their opinion was rash, and their iudgement false and erronious, proceeding from the malice and hatred of the person of Christ. Also that which they haue vsed for a reason, we haue shewed that it is likewise false: for CHRIST was so farre from breaking the Sab-

baoth, or any part of the law, that he did in full perfection fullfill the whole lawe of God.

Now followeth the opinion of the second sort of Pharasies, which sayd, How can man that is a sinner doe such miracles? as if the holy Ghost should say: If our Saviour Christe were such a prophaner and breaker of the Saboath, as you surmise him to be, then it were impossible for him, to doe such strange and wonderfull miracles, as we see he hath wrought: of this wee haue spoken before, and shall speake more hereafter, when we haue spoken generally of Miracles, of the workes of them: and therefore of the power of God, in working them, and also the power of angels, of Satan and of men therein. Whereas it is sayd; How can man that is a sinner do such Miracles? these men do insinuate, that sinners can doe some miracles in the sight of men, but to doe such a miracle, as to cure a man beeing blind from his birth, was impossible for them. It is impossible that any sinner should do this or any such miracles which Christ did, wee are therefore to shew, first, what a miracle is, that every

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one vnderstanding the nature thereof, may make such proper and peculiar vse of the same, as he ought.

A miracle is nothinge else but a rare worke apparently wrought by the sole omnipotent power of God, cleane contrary to the order and instinct of nature, far aboue nature or naturall causes.

I vse so many words, that I may speake to the capacity of all the people, whereas otherwise I might vse fewer, we are therfore first to know, that it is a worke, for indeede it must be in it selfe a true worke, déed, or fact, otherwise it cannot in it selfe, and of it selfe, make men to muse and marueil at it: at least it cannot make wise men to marueil at it. If therefore it be a miracle, it must be a sensible worke, not a worke in shew, illusion or deceit, but a worke in nature, in déed, and in truth: if it bee but an appearance of a worke, it is no miracle. If it bee onely in illusion of the senses, it is no miracle. It is then true that the illusiõs of sathan are no miracles, for hee doth nothing but delude the senses of men, neither is it the celerity or agility of mens hands which are miracles, as of Iugglers, which

deceiue the people by all actiuity in continuing the thing which they do. For they do not any true worke, but by their dexterity deceiue mens senses. These therefore are no miracles, for euery miracle must be a true worke, and fact indeed. I therefore first call a miracle, a worke, to seperate it from those that seeme to bee miracles, and yet are not, as by the works of sathan and his members, and also those that are done by agility of man, which are workes in shew, but not in deed. This kinde of miracle which is a true worke, hath beene wrought by diuers of GODS Children, as Moses when hee was sent to deliuer the people of Israell out of Egypt, did worke many miracles, to testify that he was sent of the Lord. He made Frogs, not in appearance but indeed: hee turned the water of the riuer into bloud, not in appearance but in deed. Soe also Elias wrought miracles, not in shew but in deed. So Christ wrought miracles not in shew, but in deed. For Lazarus being dead indeed, he raised him vp againe in deed: when the wine wanted at the mariage, he turned water in deed into wine in deed, as pure

wine

wine as any insued out of the Wine, and so are all the miracles which he did, workes in déed, & not onely in appearance. When therefore wee sée any wonderfull thinge come to passe, wee must examine it whether it bée a worke in déed, or only in appearance. If it bée not a worke in déed, as be the illusions of sathan, and of men, which deceiue the senses, & do not bring any worke to passe, then is it not a true miracle. For euery true miracle which the Lord hath wrought himselfe, or any of the Prophets, or our Sauiour Christ, haue béene true workes. Secondly, I shall call it a rare worke of God, for the workes of GOD, there be some which are vsuall, common & ordinary: as the preseruation of mankind, is an ordinary and vsuall work of God and it is truely sayd of the holy Ghost: that we liue, mooue, & haue our béeing in the Lord: yet because this is vsuall, ordinary, & common, yea daily and hourely, (for the Lord doth ordinarily euery day and houre, preserue men, otherwise they could not liue) I say because it is ordinary, daily & hourely, we cannot properly call it a miracle, for it doth make men to maruel, to muse, to be amazed

amased and astonied at it seeing it is soe vsuall and ordinary among them.

For it is the nature of miracles to, to make men muse and marueil at them. and therefore when as in the Euangelists, any miracle which our sauiour Christ wrought is set downe, there also immediately followeth, that the people were astonied: therefore that which is vsuall, and common, cannot properly be called a miracle. A miracle therefore must be a rare worke of God, seldom brought to passe, & for this cause we cannot say, that repentance, or regeneration is a miracle, for although repentance bee wrought in few, yet is it not properly a miracle, because it is ordinarily, and vsually at one time or another wrought in the hearts of Gods children. There be also many strange and wonderfull workes of nature, yet because they are not rare but vsuall, and ordinary, they be no miracles. An Adamant stone (we know not by what force) will draw Iron to it selfe: Iron is heauy of it selfe, and of it selfe cannot possibly moue from place to place, yet an Adamant if it bee aboue it will draw it to it selfe, which is very strange and admirable

admirable, yet because it is vsuall and common, it cannot be called a miracle. So wee may see the nature and power of some water, to turne that which in nature is gold, into stone: that is knowne to be true by experience, yet no man can shew any reason, why that water should rather doe it, then any other.

Although this bee strange and wonderfull, yet because it is vsuall and ordinary, yet in those waters, it is no miracle: for euery miracle is a rare worke that commeth to passe not ordinarily, but very seldome.

This worke is called rare, either in regard of the thing wrought, or in regard of the manner of working it.

First in respect of the thing wrought: as when the LORD sent down Manna from heauen, to feed such a great number of people as the Israelites were, this was very rare in regard of the thing wrought. So when the Lord made the Sunne to stay in the element: so likewise (as we may read) whē the Lord made the shadow of ỹ Dial to go back. Secondly, a miracle is rare in regarde of the manner of working it, as when the water was turned into blood,

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it was not a rare thing to see blood, but the manner of working it, as namely with a Rod, was most rare and was never seene before. So we do see that Christs manner of healing the blind-man was very rare: therefore a miracle: if it bee a miracle indeed, first it must be a true worke. Secondly a rare worke, either in regard of the thing it selfe, or in regard of the manner of doing it,

Apparantly wrought, &c.

Thirdly, a miracle must haue this annexed vnto it: for it must not bee obscure, but apparent, I meane not to the reason and indgment of men, but to mans sense, that is, to some of his senses, or to all of them, without controuersie or doubtinge. This wee shall see in all true miracles wrought by God, to bee of this nature, namely cleare and euident to mans senses: for either men did feele them, as the darkenes in Egypt, or else they might touch them, taste them, or smell them. When the Lord brought his people of Israell from Egipt, al the miracles which hee by his power had wrought among them, were most apparent vnto mans sense. As namely

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when they went through the red sea, there he made ỹ waters to deuide themselues, and to stand like mighty mountaines on each side of them: in such sort, that they did most manifestly see, and behold the same. So likewise they saw, when Moses stroke the stony rock, so that therout gushed water. So they saw most euidently the walls of Iericho fall down: and therefore if there be any miracle which is not apparent of it selfe, it is no miracle. Likewise what workes so euer bee done by Satan or any of his Angels, if it be not euident & to be discerned by mans sence, hence we know that it is no miracle. Let vs by this property of a true miracle, examine the miracle of the Altar of the Church of Rome, for in the sacrament of the Altar, after the Priest hath said a few words as these, (*hoc est corpus meum*) they teach ỹ there a strange worke is brought to passe: for the substance of the bread which was on the Altar, is gone and is changed into the body of Christ: if it were so, then indeed it were a miracle: but if it be a miracle, then men may discerne it by some sence or other: For let them shew mee an instance where the Lord wrought

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any miracle which hee did not subiect to the senses of man, but in this there is no miracle, which may bee discerned by the senses: for the bread in the iudgment of all the senses, seemeth the same that it was before to the sight, it seemeth to be the very same in substance, of the same qualitys and colour that it was of before, it hath the same taste it had before, to the handling it appeareth the same that it was before, and hath the same smelling that it had before, there is not any sense that iudgeth now otherwise of it, then it did before, and therfore it can be no true miracle. Indeed if before I seeing it to be bread, tasting, smelling, and touching it, do iudge it to bee bread, should now, seeing, smelling, tasting, and seeing it, perceiue it to be the body of Christ: it were a true miracle: but seeing to all the senses it appeareth one and the same that it was before, it cannot be a miracle: but they say the outward forme and external accident of the bread yet remaineth, but the substance of it is turned into the body of Christ. which though wee cannot perceiue by our senses, yet wee are to beleeue by faith. But how did Christ himselfe

selfe deale with Thomas, when hee doubted of his resurrection? he sayd; Thrust thy finger into my side, and feele whether I haue not flesh and bones, for a spirit hath not as thou feelest me to haue; hee taketh away his doubt by the sense of feelings: and if this true naturall body of Christ were there in the bread, then might wee feele as Thomas did, for Christ still retayneth that his true and naturall body, although hee bee now glorified. In so much therefore that in the bread, there is no miracle apparant to the senses, there is noe miracle at all. But this is the difference (in Gods Church) that before it was common bread, ordained and sanctified by the Lord, for the nourishment of our bodyes, but now it is the holy bread, appoynted, and set apart, and sanctified by the Lord, not so much for the nourishment of our bodies,, but especially for the confirmation of our fayth and the foode of our soules. The same also is to be said of the Wine.

Fourthly I adde: Wrought by the sole omnipotent power of GOD. Wherein I note the workers of miracles. The LORD himselfe worketh miracles, but

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peculiarly and properly by his power, and not by his wisdom though both be infinite & that a miracle is wrought by the power of God, I proue by these reasons. First a miracle is a worke of great power farre passing the power of all creatures, therefore it must nedes bee wrought by that power of the Creator.

Secondly, it is apparent by diuers places of the word of God, as Ioel. 2.21.30. there the holy Ghost ascribeth the working of miracles to the LORD him-selfe. I will shew wonders in heauen & earth, saith the Lord, I care not O land, for I will doe great things. Thirdly, the holy Ghost vseth this as an argument to proue, that *Iehouah* is the Lord, and is onely to bee serued, Leuit.26. Deut.28. Albeit the Magitians of Egypt could worke many admirable wonders by their owne Art, and by the instruction of the Diuell, yet they confessed that the workes of Moses were not done by Moses power, nor yet by art or skill that was in Moses, nor by any natural causes, but by the finger of God, which is nothing else but his power. By this argument doth Christ proue, that his miracles

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were not done by the power of Belzebub: If I by the finger of God cast out diuels, by whome doe your Children cast them out.

Lastly, this may also appeare by the consideration of the meanes which the Lord vseth in working of miracles. As the shadow of Peter to cure diseases. Can any mans shadow cure another? No, but the Lord would haue that this meanes should shew that the things were wrought by his power. So the Handkercher of Paul did cure diseases, not that there were any such vertues in it, but that it came from the Lord: So also did the hem of Christs garment: is there any power in the hem of a mans garment to cure diseases? surely no, but the Lord vseth that means to teach vs thereby that his power onely doth worke it. Here then wee must acknowledge, that miracles are wrought onely by the Lord, and serue greatly to the aduancing of his glory.

Lastly wee must consider, that a miracle is contrarye to the instinct of Nature. Nature had neuer any such inclination, as to bring to passe any miracle, as when the water stoods on

two parts, nature had a desire to make the waters runne, when as then the waters stood, it was contrary to nature.

The Vse.

The vse that we must make hereof, is to giue to God that which is his owne, that we should acknowledge him to be the sole author and worker of miracles, that either haue beene or shall be in the world. If thou giue them to Satan, then dost thou constitute him, instead of the Lord himselfe. Art thou the Lords? then know, that neither Sathan, nor any creature, is able to worke any miracle against thée. If thou be his, rather then his name should be dishonoured by thée, hee will worke miraculously, for thy good and preseruation.

Further, this serueth to ratifie our faith in the power of God. The Diuell is his seruant, whether he will or not, he can do nothing but that which the Lord willeth.

And hereby wee hold that our bodyes shall bee raysed againe at the last day. For God is able to worke all miracles: although there bee neither bone, skinne, nor flesh

flesh left, yet hee is able to ioyne flesh to flesh, sinew to sinew, and raise vs vp again with the same bodies we had before.

The second part of this *Sermon.*

Now remaineth some-thing to be spoken more plainely and particularly of miracles. For as in all other things, so also in miracles, the Lord vseth diuers and sundry wayes of working. For either himselfe alone, & of himselfe alone, or else he vseth som creature in ỹ working of the same. As in the creatiō of the world he vsed not any thing out of himselfe, but in himselfe, by himselfe and of himselfe alone, he created all things of nothing. So likewise in the working of some miracles, it pleaseth him not to admit the vse of any creature whatsoeuer. As when he staied the sunne in the firmament, he did it of himselfe without the helpe of any other. So also hee turned backe the shadow of the Dyall of Azah by him-selfe alone without the vse of any other. But neuertheless in working some miracles, he vseth meanes, but

especially man for the meanes thereof. As in all the miracles wrought in Egipt, the Lord did worke them indeed, but by the hand of Moses and Aaron. He deuided the red sea so, that Israel passed through on dry foote, but it was done by Moses. So also hee wrought many miracles in the wildernesse before the Israelites, but by the hands of Moses and Aaron. So some miracels were done by Judges, some by Elizæus, and others of the Prophets. So also God wrought miracles afterward, not only by his Sonne, but also by the hands of the Apostles. So that it is a true point of religion, to hold that the Lord in working of miracles, doth often-times vse the meanes of man therein. In this doctrine we are to take heed of these two dangerous points. First, that we derogate nothing from the Maiestie of God, although he vse meanes in the working of many miracles. Secondly that we do not magnifie the Creature, which the Lord vseth, aboue that which is conuenient. Into which very many haue fallen here-tofore. For the auoyding therefore of them, it is necessary to hold these two points of

Religi-

Religion: first to beleeue and know that the omnipotent power of GOD cannot bee communicated to any creature. For the Lord saith, as of his wisdome, iustice and mercy, so also of his power. I will not giue my glory to another. Wee are therefore to hold, that the power of God cannot beseeme any creature whatsoeuer, no though it bee an Angell of Heauen. Secondly, that wee must know, remember, and constantly beleeue, that albeit the power of GOD could bee communicated to any creature, either in heauen or in earth, yet that there is no creature capeable thereof, no creature is able to beare it. This is euident in the example of Peter, before whom when CHRIST had wrought a miracle, and hee had seene some small sight of his glory, he sayd, Depart from mee Lord for I am a sinfull man. If Peter could not abide the glimmering of his glory, and if it brought his sinnes to memory, in so much that hee thought himselfe vnworthy of his presence: how much more vnable had hee beene to beare the weight thereof?

But (may some say) if this be so why

then doth the Lord vse meanes in working of myracles? why doth hee vse men Prophets, Apostles, yea and those also which haue no iustifying faith, and also other creatures? I answere, the Lord vseth them, not because hee stands in neede of them (for hee can worke all things of himselfe) neither vseth he them, that men should ascribe lesse to him, and more to the creatures which hee vseth, but for to teach vs these three things.

First to teach vs, how his maiestie doth approue the meanes whereby things are brought to passe: for if the Lord vseth meanes when as they be of lesse vse, much more will hee approue when the meanes are vsed which haue some power to bring things to passe. This then is the first cause why the Lord vseth meanes, to shew that hee would haue vs kept, maintained, and liue in this world, but so, as by vsing such meanes, as his maiesty shall appoint. Therefore no man ought to neglect and contemne the meanes, least hee oppose himselfe against the Lord.

Secondlye, the Lord vseth creatures in working myracles, to support and vphold

vphold mans weakenesse, who is not able to loke on his Maiestie, when her worketh him-selfe. This is plaine in the example of the Israelites. Exod. 19. when they came to Mount Sinai, to heare the Lord, there was such thunder and lightning, and the sound of a trumpet exceding lowd, and the Mount all of a smoake, because the Lord came downe by fire, they were so bereft of their sences, and were so afraide, that afterward they desired the Lord not to speake to them him-selfe any more, but that they might haue Moyses to speake vnto them, and they would heare him.

Thirdly, the Lord vseth meanes for the tryall of our faith, of our religion, and conscience, whether wée will ascribe the worke that is wrought to the worker thereof, or to the meanes, or partlye to the worker, or partly to the meanes, or as some doe, all to the meanes, and none to the worker. The Lord tryeth whether wee will be constant, to ascribe the power that is in miracles vnto his Maiestie, for in the myracles of Christ, wé se how diuerslye they were expounded, albeit

they were effected by the finger of God, yet the Phariſes would not aſcribe them to the worker, but ſayd, that hee wrought miracles by Belzebub the Prince of Diuels. This is the corruption of man and want of faith: they are ready to aſcribe though not all, yet at the leaſt ſome part of the miracle to creatures, which are but the meane, and not wholy to the Lord, who is the onely worker of miracles: for theſe cauſes the Lord vſeth meanes in working miracles, to teach vs theſe things thereby, for all miracles are wrought not for him, but for our cauſe.

The meanes which the Lord vſeth are of diuers ſorts, but eſpecially three.

Firſt, ſome meanes which the Lord vſeth in working of miracles, are ſuch as may ſeeme to men to haue ſome power in them, for the working of the miracle. As Exod. 14. 16 when Moſes came to the red ſea, he lift vp his Rod, and ſtretched out his hand ouer the waters. So when he came to the Rock Exod. 17. 6. to get water for the people, hee ſtroke the Rocke with his ſtaffe, which ſeemed to haue ſome power in it to make the water guſh out of the Rock, as afterwards it did.

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The second sort of meanes which the LORD vseth, are such as haue not so much as an appearance of any force or power, or vse, in the working of the miracle. Such was the hem of Christes garment. The hem of a garment hath not so much as an apperance that it should heale any that are diseased. Such was the handkercher of Paul to cure diseases, what are handkerchers or swadling clowtes (as we may as well say, for the curing of diseases) such was the shadowe of Peter, whereunto some comming were healed of their diseases. Act. 19. 12. Act. 5. 15.

These were wrought when the Apostles were ignorant thereof, and when they were occupied about other matters. But yet it pleaseth the lord to vse such meanes, although they haue not any appearance of any power in the working of a miracle.

Thirdly, the Lord vseth such meanes as are not auayable for the worke, but seeme to hinder it, as in curing of the blind man, the clay which was made, and layd vpon his eyes: this Christ (who was God and man) vsed, though it seemed to containe in it a naturall hinderance to the

Miracle. These three sort of meanes the LORD vseth, to teach vs three notable points.

First, he vseth the first meanes to trye the truth of our fayth, to see whether wee be so firme in fayth, and whether we will so wholly rely vppon him, as that hee will giue all glory to him for the working of the miracle, though the meanes vsed doe seeme to haue some power of bringing it to passe, we must therefore learne to giue all glory to the Lord whatsoeuer.

Secondly, the second sort of meanes that the Lord vseth, is to teach vs, that it is hee alone that worketh miracles, and not the creature which is vsed, his sole omnipotent power doth worke it: Let the meanes do or bee what it will, whether it be any creature what-so-euer, or no creature, as was the shadow of Peter, which was nothing, but the absence of light. Let vs acknowledge the LORD to bee the onely cause and worker of the miracle.

Thirdly, the third sort of meanes, teacheth vs to giue nothing to the creature it selfe which is vsed, which is contrary

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to the opinion of many superstitious people, and contrary to all Coniurers, Sorcerers, or Casters of Figures: Sathan maketh them to thinke that the miracle is brought to passe by him, or the meanes which he appointeth, and not by the power of God.

But we must acknowledge that al creatures whatsoeuer, that albeit the power of Angells bee great, yet if all these were ioyned together, yet they were not able to worke the least miracle that could be. This doctrine hath singular vse. First, it teacheth vs what a miracle is. Secondly, what a miracle is not: as all manner of appearances are no miracles, whether they be illusions of Sathan, or proceed from the deceipt, subtilty, and agility of man, none of them are miracles. So the preseruation of mankinde, albeit it be a true worke wrought by God only, yet because it is a true vsuall and ordinary worke, it is no miracle, for euery miracle is a rare worke of God.

Thirdly, it teacheth vs that no worke is a miracle which cannot be felt, smelled, or perceiued by some of the senses: when

when men therefore hold vs in hand that there is a miracle, yet if we cannot see any thing, feele, smell, or tast any thing, contrary to the ordinary manner, there is no miracle wrought. Therefore let the malignant Church of Rome, teach, write, and decree in their councells, that there is a miracle wrought in the sacrifice of their Altar: Yet because I can neyther see, touch, smell, nor tast any thing but the same that was before, it cannot be any miracle.

Fourthly, euery miracle is wrought by the sole omnipotent power of God.

If any worke be done by the power of Sathan, or of any man: or any thing be done wonderfully by the power of Nature, it is no miracle. If Sathan hath power to do any strange thing, it is a naturall worke, and therefore no miracle. So also of the good Angells. So likewise if wee see strange thinges come to passe in the Heauens by Naturall causes, wee are not to thinke they are any miracles.

Last of all, if any thing fall out according

ding to the race strength and power of some Waters, or other creatures, if it fall out by Nature, or if partly by art, and partly by nature, it is no miracle. Whatsoeuer therefore is not brought to passe by the sole omnipotent power of God, and that is not contrary to Nature, it is no miracle.

It followeth now to see, how many sorts and kindes of miracles there be. I meane not how many sorts there bee in Nature (for so there is but onely one true miracle) but in name, and as they are called, for so there may be diuerse, and this I gather out of the words of these Pharisees. How can man that is a sinner do such miracles? insinuating therby, that there be some miracles which sinners may doe, yet not such as CHRIST had done: Out of this place then wee gather that in name there be two sorts of miracles. One is a true and diuine miracle, which is that whereof we haue spoken before, which is an vndeceauable miracle, for it is not done to deceiue any, but to magnifie the worke thereof, and for the good of them

them for whom it is wrought, and for the profit of those which behold it: it is called diuine, because it is wrought by the sole omnipotent power of God. Besides this there is a false, vaine, and deceiueable miracle: false I say because it is not this, for whatsoeuer is not this, is a false Miracle, and vaine, because it cannot haue any good, godly, profitable, and holy vse to the conscience of man, and deceiueable, because it deludeth men that are to discerne and iudge of it. This is the miracle which the Pharisees here speake of, the which is granted to bee done by the wicked. Else-where in the Scriptures wee read, who are the workers of this miracle, as namely Sathan himselfe doth often-times worke it.

So also his Ministers doe often-times worke the same, for the holy Ghost teacheth vs, Math. 24. 24 That in the latter daies there shall come false Christs and false Prophets, and shewe great signes, and wonders, so that if it were possible they should deceiue the verye Elect. We must not imagine that the false Christs shall worke true miracles, but they shall worke

worke such strange and wonderfull things, that they should carry away many after them: nay if the Lord had not decreede in his secret councell to saue them that they should neuer fall away, they would also deceiue them. Whereby wee may bee admonished, that seeing wee are in the last age of the world, that fearefull times are at hand, wherein false Christs shall arise and deceiue many. And is not Sathan now strong in the hearts of the reprobates: that they will teach false doctrines.

Now what if Heretickes and Scismatickes should haue power to confirme their doctrine by myracles and strange wonders: would not many beleeue in them? Let vs therefore (as Paul taught the Galathians) prepare our hearts that if an Angell from Heauen teach vs any other doctrine then that which wee haue receiued in the written worde of GOD, let him bee accursed. The Holy Ghost also foretelleth vs. 2. Thes. 2. 9. That before the comming of CHRIST to iudgement, shall appeare Antichrist with al his power, with signes, and lying wonders,

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The Holy Ghost doth before admonish vs hereof. That wee should not wauer at euery motion, not fall away at euery tryal, but bee constant, and hold fast the Doctrine which wee haue receiued from the Lord, by his Prophets, his Sonne, and his Apostles: then although we be tried with Heretiks and Schismatiks, and seeme to our selues and to others to be lost, yet we shall be reserued to eternall saluation.

But some man may say. If Sathan can worke such miracles, and the Lord would haue false Christs to arise and work wonders, how shall we iudge of a miracle that is done: whether it proceed from the Lord or from Sathan and his Ministers, from a good cause and worker, or from an euill, and what we are to hold and thinke of the power of Sathan, how farre it reacheth, & what it is able to do. I answer, that this is a very necessary point to be knowne, and seeing we haue entred into the handling of Miracles, wee will shew what miracles can bee wrought by Sathan, what is his power, where it beginneth, and where it endeth.

The

The third part of this Sermon.

Now therefore it remayneth to speake of the power of Sathan. Certaine it is, and we are to beleeue it by faith, that the power of Sathan is not equall to the power of GOD: It is not so strong so large, and so wide: it is euery way infinitly lesse: there is no comparison betweene that which is infinite, and that which is finite. If we compare it with good Angels, it wil be lesse then some, and greater then other some, as afterward we shall more plainely see: but if wee compare it with the power of man, it is farre greater euery way: but yet wee must know that it is a finite and naturall power, not supernaturall; for then none could bee saued: it is mighty, but yet not Almighty. But that we may better conceiue of it, let vs see wherein it lyeth. All the power that Sathan hath, consisteth in two points: First in his knowledge or vnderstanding.

Secondly, in his deed, action, or worke. For according as a mans knowledge is such

such is his deed: so is Sathans. as his knowledge is great, so also his worke great. For his knowledge it is to be considered whence it ariseth, and how he commeth by it, so shall we better iudge of the greatnesse thereof. He hath his knowledge by these meanes that follow.

Firſt from his ſpirituall Nature, for by Nature hee is a Spirit, and therfore by Nature hath the measure of knowledge giuen by God to a ſpirit which is greate. Wee know that there is a greater measure of knowledge in man, then is in a brute beast, by reason of that nature which the Lord hath giuen to man aboue beasts. So the Deuell is made of a ſpirituall ſubſtance, and of that only: ſo that he hath not a body which may hinder him to ſee into the nature, quality & operation of a ſpirit, and therefore being a ſpirit, he hath the knowledge of a ſpirit. In that therefore he is a ſpirit, he hath a greater familiarity with our ſpirits, then otherwiſe hee could haue. In regard therefore of his nature his knowledge is great.

Secondarily, the measure of his knowledge may bee diſcerned by his creation.

God

God created him a good Angell, and gaue him the same measure of knowledge that he gaue to other Angells: Loke therefore what knowledge is in a good angell by creation, the same knowledge is in Sathan by his creation. It may bee that he retaineth still that measure of knowledge which hee then receiued, albeit as it may bee thought, that as man by his fall, lost a great measure of that knowledge which hee had by his creation: so the Diuell lost a great measure of his knowledge by his Apostacie from the Lord. Further it is to bee knowne, that the diuill beeing now fallen, is not of the consultation of the Lord, as the good Angels are, for they stand allwaues before his face, ready to doe any thing that hee shall command them, for the good of the Elect, and therefore they are of the consultations of the Lord, but Sathan is not so, and therefore he cannot haue so great knowledge as they haue, which is a great comfort to those that be the true children of God that the good Angels, by the measure of their knowledge, are more able to saue and defend vs, then the Diuill is by the mea-

sure of his knowledge to harme vs.

Thirdly, the Diuill since his fall, hath increased his knowledge, both on the things on earth, and of the wayes of God, by long obseruations and continuall experience, who hath alwayes had experimentall knowledge of the nature of man: for he is wel acquainted with the age of men, hee knoweth what be their affections, what is their nature, and what is their disposition, he knoweth what things be offensiue to men, he knoweth also what pleaseth them best in their young age, what in their middle age, & what in their old age. And as in these things, so also hath hee experience in supernaturall things. For hee remembreth by whom he hath bin resisted & who will not yéeld to him. This thē must greatly amplifie his knowledge, séeing he hath alwayes had such long experience of all things that come to passe. As put the case there were one man aliue which were perfect in sence, in body, in minde, in reason, and memory, and in all the faculties both of the body and the minde, that had liued from the beginning of the world vnto this day, and had obserued all

things

things that had fallen out heretofore: this man would tell such wonderfull thinges, both past and to come, by naturall causes, and continuall observation, that I feare me least many would worshippe him as a God: therefore the diuell must nedes haue great knowledge, seeing that he hath had all these. But he knoweth more then any man could haue done: for he doth not onely know those among whome hee liueth, and things that falleth out amongst them, but he goeth about into euery family and country, obserueth what is done, and is well acquainted with their conuersation.

Fourthly, besides this he hath also another meanes to increase his knowledge. When the Lord commaundeth him to appeare before him to render accompts of all the workes that hee hath done, Iob. 1. 16. When the children of GOD, that is, the good Angels came before the LORD, Sathan stood amongst them, and the LORD sayd vnto him, Whence commest thou? and hee answered, From compassing the earth too and fro: And the LORD sayd: Hast thou not considered my seruant *Iob*, how there is none like him in the

earth, an vpright and iust man? Sathan answered: It is not for nothing that *Iob* feareth thee, hast thou not made a hedge about him and his house, and about euery thing which hee hath on euery side? but touch all that hee hath, and then see whether hee will not blaspheme thee to thy face. Sathan knew well enough, that man will make shew of religion in prosperity, but in aduersity, by impatience would fall away: For heere-vpon the Lord gaue him liberty to afflict Iob, in visiting his body with sickneſſe, in taking away his children, and his goods: but whence hath he this knowledge? from the reuelation of the Lord: he knew that Iob should bee visited with great sickneſſe, and loose his children, and his goods, when he heard it from the Lord, and so he knoweth many other things which are to come to passe, and after he once knoweth them, he goeth to Witches or such like, and tells them thereof, who likewise tell others of the same before it comes to passe, & so deceiue men thereby, making them to thinke that they know it of themselues: but neither they, nor the Diuel know it of themselues,

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but by reuelation of the LORD vnto Sathan.

Fiftly, Sathan hath another excellent meanes to increase his knowledge which the Lord hath also granted vnto men: for they know what is to come by the Reuelation of the Prophets: for if there be any curse belonging to the people, the Prophets do denounce the same, and make the people to know thereof, by the preaching of the word: whereas therefore the word is preached, there is Sathan present: hee obserueth the doctrine, whether it bee of power to bring men from the kingdome of darkenesse, to the Lord: from sinne vnto repentance. If it bee, then is hee most busie, either to stop it from the Eare, or to pull it out of the heart, if they haue once receiued it, as Math. 13. 19. By this meanes therefore hee increaseth his knowledge, that he may worke more couertly and bs the lesse discerned: for he can turne him-selfe into an Angel of light.

Sixtly, hee hath yet another meanes to increase his knowledge, and that is by the obseruation of naturall causes. If you speake of an Astronomer, hee can tell that

keff: if yée speake of an Astrologer, hée is most cunning therein. Yea that which men go seeke, and as it were groape at in the darke, hée beholdeth and knoweth most certainely, and can tell any thing that is to come to passe by the course of the Starres, and other naturall causes. If we speake of knowledge in the Artes, there is none comparable to him: hée is most skilfull in all the tongues, and there is no time that is hidde from him. So that by these meanes hée hath wonderfully increased his knowledge.

But some may say: Hath he knowledge in any thing, in which the good Angells haue no knowledge? No, for they are as diligent for the saluation of the godly, as he is for their destruction. psal. 91. 11. God giueth his Angels charge to keepe Christ & all that are his, in al their waies: nay they pitch their Tents about him that feareth the Lord to kep him on every side, that no harme befall him any way. And therfore as sone as Sathan had left of tempting Christ the good Angells came & ministred vnto him all things that were requisit for him in this life. But doth not Sathans know-

knowledge serue to the working of a miracle? No: for it is a finite knowledge, and therefore cannot produce any miracle, for euery true miracle is wrought by an omnipotent power.

The second thing wherein Satans power doth consist in his action, or his deede, which as his knowledge is great, so it is likewise great. Let vs therefore see his actions. The deed of perswading is great, for he moued Cain contrary to his knowledge and contrary to nature, not onely to reuile his brother, but to kill him, hee talked not with Caine, but by motions and perswasions in his heart did allure him thereunto. But it appeareth more great in his first action against man-kind, as when he came to our first parents in the forme of a Serpent (which argueth his great power, that he can transforme himself into such a creature, and abuse the tongue of a Serpent to that end) So we read of his actions also in Exodus, when Moses wrought miracles before Pharaoh by the finger of God. Satan also by his Enchanters did worke ỹ same myracles, yet not true miracles, because they did them not by the finger of

God, but by the power of Sathan. So also 1. Samuell. 28. Sathan comes to a witch, and would also tell ỳ witch what succesſe Saul ſhould haue in his batraile that he toke in hand, hee came in the ſhape of Samuell, ſo that Saul thought he had bin Samuell. So alſo would hee talke familiarly with men: therefore the Lord gaue a law, that if any one conſulted with a familiar ſpirit, hee ſhould die, which law had beene in vaine, if none had conſulted familiarly with him.

So hee was a lyer in the mouth of all the falſe Prophets, although they themſelues did not at that time perceiue it. So hee poſſeſſed mens bodies, as in the Goſpell, when our Sauiour had caſt him out of a man, hee ſtraight way went into a heard of Swine, and euen ſo hee is able to draw mens bodies after him. We may alſo ſée his power by a comparíſon with the good Angels. 2. Kings. 19. An Angell of the Lord ſlew an hundreth and 85000. men of Zenacheribs Hoſt in one night. Now the ſame power is in Sathan by his creation, which hereby appeareth to be very great. So when he carried Chriſts body vppon a pinnacle of the Temple ſ vp into a mountaine

taine to tempt him. And Acts. 16. 19. there were exorcistes that would call forth Diuels in the name of Iesus, but the euell spirit in the man, ranne on them, and ouer-came them, so that they fled out of the house naked, and wounded. It is therfore certaine, that Sathan is of a wonderfull power, and that the children of God haue often-times tried, both in themselues and also in others. Amongst many other I remember one that is worthy remembrance,

There was a man in Geneua, who falling some-thing to fall out contrary to his minde, and for diuers causes which is not needfull to repeate, blasphemed God & desired that if there were any Diuels they might come and take him away, who was presently in the ayre, & neuer heard of after, saue only that his cap fell off his head, which sheweth that Sathan hath great power: this teacheth vs that men must not be carelesse, but must looke to themselues. For Satan is a roaring Lion seeking who he may soonest deuoure: watch therefore and pray, least yee fall into temptation. But if Satans power be so great, how comes it to passe,

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that many men do so well in this world: I answere this power is barred and limitted by the Lord, and that by two especiall limits. The first limit, is his Nature, for hee is not able to doe any thing then that which his naturall disposition will permit and suffer. The second limit is, the will of GOD: for hée can do nothing against the will of GOD. Except the Lord doe either permit him or command him, hee is not able to doe any thing at all. As it is also in other creatures, the waters should by nature ouer-flowe the whole earth, yet they doe not: because it is the will of GOD. So also is it with Sathan, as appeareth, when the Lord gaue him power of all Iobs goods, beyond the Lords will hée could not goe, for the LORD will not suffer him to doe any thing to his Children: but onely that which shall tend to their good. Art thou in misery, or in any dangerous distresse, wherein thou art most subiect to the cruelty of Sathan: bee of good comfort, Sathan is limitted, hée cannot hoe any thing to thée, but onely that which the Lord commandeth him. But may not Sathans knowledge

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and power be vsed? I answere it may. GOD vseth it in punishing, trying, and correcting his children. Agayne the Apostles vsed his power, for they haue deliuered men to Sathan as Paul diode. 1. Tim. 1. 20. Himeneus, and Alexander, & as hee would haue done the incestuous Corinthe. But may not a man vse it in familiar sort, in talking, bargaining & consulting with Sathan? No. This is forbidden Deu. 18. Leuit. 20. & we are commaunded to resist the Diuell, and to flie from him, wee must not therefore consult with him. Hee may oftentimes tell the truth, but wee must not accept it. Christ gaue vs example hereof, for he sayd, that CHRIST was the Sonne of GOD, which was a truth, yet CHRIST commaunded him to bee silent, to teach vs, that the truth is not to be receiued from him, for he is the Father of lies. Here then all men are forbidden to seeke vnto Satan, to know any truth whatsoeuer. And therfore hereby we condemne those that vse witchery, by the counsell of Sathan: and in the former places, the very action of consulting with Satan, though no harme come thereby, is flatly death to

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the party: I would this law were established in all all Christian Churches, then there would not bee so many witches in that kinde, as now there are. I confesse indeede, there bee some which bee counted witches, which indeede are not, as namely those which hurt Cattle, as Oxen, Horse, Swine, or such like: or else Children, not from the counsell of Sathan, but by the traditions of other women, by poysoning them in dooing nothinge but vsing the naturall causes thereof. Those I would haue punished, yet not in the name of witches, but in the name of murtherers. Some men think that they may ouer-rule Sathan by coniuration, in vsing this preparation, which is set downe by some of late, that they must make a Circle, and in it make Triangles, Quadrangles, and Crosses, and speake certaine words as saying the Pater noster, and many other such like thinges, that they may call vp Sathan in what shape they will, and hee will appeare and do for them, that which they desire. But is Sathan a friend of theirs? can any such things make him obedient to man? Doost thou thinke that thou canst ouer-rule him by this meanes?

No

No surely, but hee rather by this meanes deceiueth thee, and all that are of thine opinion. And thus he deceiueth them that vse Characters. So there bee Charmes vsed to get away the Head-ache, and Toth-ach. But doth the Charme get it away? No, Sathan knoweth before that thy Head-ach shall goe away, and therefore causeth thee to vse that Charme, and thereby would moue thee to ascribe it to the Charme.

But when Sathan whispereth men in their eares, how shall they know whether it be hee, or a good angell that speaketh to them? I answere: there be diuerse manifest tokens, where by thou maiest discerne this.

First the Lord doth not now vse such meanes to reueale his will vnto men: thou art therefore, alway to suspect it to bee of Sathan.

Secondly, if it be a good angel thou maiest know by this: for if it be a good angell, it will tell thee, either at first or at last, what it is, and for what it commeth, and from whence, as in times past the good angels shewed themselues to Abraham and Lot.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, if it be a good Angell, he will assure thee to keepe the written word of God, if he doe not, then suspect him.

The vse.

The vse of all this doctrine is to lead vs vnto God, to acknowledge him to be our onely Lord and Sauiour, and to imbrace the Sonne of God, as our King. In all things therfore we must go vnto him.

But whereas it is sayd: How can a man that is a sinner doe such miracles? it may be asked whether Gods enemies can worke any miracles? I answere: He that worketh is not against Christ, but with him: and we see that those which indeauored, Acts. 16. to worke a miracle could not. And there was a dissention among them.

Herein wee see that the Lord doth so worke, that Christ and his doe find fauour among their enemies, and that by their dissention among themselues. Here wee see y Schisme is neyther a note of a false Church, nor yet of a true Church, here it is in a false Church Schisme ariseth of the diuersity of knowledge and iudgement of men

men: for all men haue not one knowledge and iudgement, and all se not the truth, and if they should, yet all haue not the like yelding affection therevnto. We are therefore to prepare our selues to mete with schismes, for it is necessary that there should be Heresies, 1. Cor. 11. 10. and that in the Church of God, that those which are approued might bee knowne.

FINIS.